



# ***People... Progress... Prosperity!***

*Gerry Reid's New Liberalism.  
A Plan to Develop Newfoundland  
and Labrador for the Primary  
Benefit of its People.*

*The Liberal Party of Newfoundland and Labrador  
Platform 2007 General Election*



Fellow Newfoundlanders and Labradorians:

The Liberal Party of Newfoundland and Labrador has a long-term plan of action and vision for the development of this province and its people. It is a plan that outlines 15 critical points that focus on **People...Progress...Prosperity**.

The needs of the people of our province, especially in rural areas, have been ignored by the Williams Government over the past four years. Our plan provides new ideas and new initiatives that will encourage new growth in every region of Newfoundland and Labrador.

We must invest in people if we are to grow and prosper as a province. The current approach is not working. We have hundreds of millions of dollars in surpluses, yet people are suffering. Outmigration is occurring at an alarming rate; our social and health care programs are in crisis; people are struggling to heat their homes because of the increased cost of living. The issues of ordinary people must be addressed.

We feel our initiatives will lead to progress. If new opportunities and services are created, people will be able to stay in their communities and regions. If the appropriate programs are developed, people should not have to suffer because of poverty or addictions.

We are already feeling the prosperity of Liberal projects such as Hibernia, Terra Nova, White Rose and Voisey's Bay. While the provincial coffers are flush with cash from the revenues of these projects, our people are not seeing the direct benefits. With increased opportunity should come increased prosperity for the average person. The people of Newfoundland and Labrador are not seeing the wealth of their resources and this must change.

Our initiatives will put money back in people's pockets; address social issues; ensure effective and responsible resource development in every sector; support the rights of individuals; and provide truly open and accountable governance. We feel our plan represents the best approach; a plan that focuses on people!

I invite everyone to read our long-term plan of action for the people of Newfoundland and Labrador. If you feel that more focus should be placed on your issues, I ask that you consider supporting the Liberal Party.

Thank you.

Gerry Reid  
Leader  
Liberal Party of Newfoundland and Labrador

***People...Progress...Prosperity!***



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*Gerry Reid's New Liberalism*

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7.

*Putting Money  
into People's Pockets*

## Chapter 1 - Putting Money into People's Pockets

The Liberal Party of Newfoundland and Labrador is committed to providing fair and affordable fee and tax structures for the people of this province. While other political parties and leaders feel that fee increases are an acceptable method of taxation, our party believes that access to government services should be affordable. Excessive fees should not prevent people from completing daily tasks and living their lives. Unfortunately, this is not the case for many in our province today.

The Liberal Party of Newfoundland and Labrador is committed to addressing many of these consumer issues and putting your hard-earned money back into your pocket.

*-Eliminate the special 15% tax on insurance*

**A Liberal Government will eliminate the 15 percent tax on insurance in the first three years of its mandate.**

Newfoundland and Labrador is the only province in Canada where consumers pay a special 15 percent tax on insurance. This unnecessary tax is paid by every individual, family or business person who owns a vehicle, home or business in this province.

The Liberal Party of Newfoundland and Labrador believes this is an unfair tax grab by government and will eliminate this cost to consumers and small business people. Eliminating this extra cost will help consumers save money and allow them to spend on other necessities. It will also eliminate a tax that has hindered business people in this province and free up necessary investment capital that can be put back into the growth of their businesses.

*-Reducing the provincial tax on gasoline*

**A Liberal Government will immediately reduce the provincial gas tax by 4.5 cents per litre to 12 cents a litre. This will make our province more competitive with the other Atlantic provinces.**

Consumers in every region of our province have felt the sting of increasing gas prices. Vehicle travel has become very expensive for the average person and has also added to the cost of buying goods at local businesses. While the provincial government is making billions of dollars from our offshore oil and gas resources, the average person is not seeing the benefits of these resources. Not only does Newfoundland and Labrador have some of the highest gasoline prices in the country, we also have the highest gasoline taxes. Other Atlantic provinces are moving to lower their taxes, while our province refuses to act. This will certainly hinder our economic competitiveness with other provinces and continue to remove millions of dollars from the pockets of Newfoundlanders and Labradorians. The Liberal Party of Newfoundland and Labrador believes this tax burden is too high.

*-Reducing taxes on home heating*

**A Liberal Government will eliminate the provincial portion of the Harmonized Sales Tax (HST) on home heating costs, including electricity, oil and other forms of heat to which the HST applies. We will also work with the federal government in an effort to have the federal portion of this tax eliminated.**

Electricity rates have been rising consistently over the past number of years. While there are many world-wide factors contributing to these increases, government must do something to address these costs on a local provincial level. There are too many people in Newfoundland and Labrador having to make sacrifices just to afford the costs of heating their homes. Our province has a cold winter climate and heat is a necessity of life, not a luxury. Government should not be adding to this burden by taxing heat. Other necessities such as food are not taxed and neither should the cost of heating.

*- Eliminating the HST on funeral expenses*

**A Liberal Government will eliminate the provincial portion of the HST on funeral costs. We will also lobby the federal government in an effort to have the federal portion of this tax eliminated.**

Many people struggle to afford the costs of providing their loved ones with a proper funeral. At this difficult time of people's lives, government should not be making a tax grab and placing more stress on families by charging a tax on funeral costs.

*-Review of province's fee structure*

**A Liberal Government will decrease the cost of registering a motor vehicle by \$40 per year and return the cost back to the pre-Williams level of \$140.**

**A Liberal Government will undertake a review of all fee increases implemented by the Williams Government to determine a fair and affordable fee structure for consumers.**

Over the past four years, the Williams Government increased every fee in the province and introduced new ones. The Liberal Party disagreed with these increases because of the unnecessary and excessive costs for the taxpayers of the province. One of the most notable increases was made to the cost of registering a vehicle, an extra \$40 every year.

*- Continued review of personal income tax structure*

**A Liberal Government will continue to review the province's personal income tax structure and seek future opportunities to lessen the tax burden placed on our citizens.**

Many residents of Newfoundland and Labrador are choosing to work and file taxes in other provinces because of lower personal income tax rates. As offshore oil revenues increase, there will be more opportunity to lessen the taxation burden on the people of this province and make us more competitive with other jurisdictions.



2.

*Creating Jobs  
and Opportunities*

## Chapter 2 - Creating Jobs and Opportunities

The Liberal Party of Newfoundland and Labrador is committed to generating new jobs and opportunities for the people of our province. The key to job creation is providing opportunities for new business and industry. Government must realize that new initiatives and strategies must be brought forward to stimulate interest in business opportunities available to investors.

The Liberal Party of Newfoundland and Labrador is committed to improving the business climate in our province and providing new incentives to encourage business growth.

### Business

- *Improve the business investment climate*

**A Liberal Government will improve the business investment climate in Newfoundland and Labrador by showing respect to our current and potential business partners, including working together with business and labour in partnership.**

The business investment climate in Newfoundland and Labrador has suffered over the past four years as a result of the confrontational approach of the Williams Government. During the past four years, our elected government representatives have insulted and attacked business leaders wanting to invest in Newfoundland and Labrador. While governments are never forced to accept a deal, courtesy should always be shown to those wanting to invest in our province.

- *Targeted tax breaks for business*

**A Liberal Government, in consultation with small business groups, will provide targeted tax breaks to business operators who will encourage new business investment and expansion throughout Newfoundland and Labrador.**

When deciding to start or grow a new business, investors need every dollar available to them. This injection of capital is most needed in the early stages of developing a business and when decisions are made to expand and grow a business.

Provincial tax regimes are one of the costs that make starting or expanding a business more difficult. These necessary dollars inject much-needed capital, help investment decisions and can be a significant factor as to whether business plans move forward at a particular time.

- *Revitalize and expand the Edge Program*

**A Liberal Government will consult with business and industry to develop initiatives that will revitalize and expand the Edge Program to provide more investment opportunities in Newfoundland and Labrador, target more businesses, and make the program more accessible for small and localized business.**

The attractiveness for many businesses to invest in Newfoundland and Labrador is oftentimes dictated by financial incentives that help make companies more profitable and provide them with a perceived opportunity to grow. For several years, the provincial government has operated the Edge Program to provide these incentives.

One of the complaints received from business is that the Edge Program must be updated and expanded to further meet the needs of investors and be more competitive with other provinces. This program has proven to be a successful initiative in attracting business and the Liberal Party is committed to strengthening the program to be more business friendly.

- *Establish a major long-range marketing and investment initiative to attract business firms*

**A Liberal Government will invest in a major long-range marketing and investment initiative in an effort to educate and attract new investors to the many business opportunities that exist in Newfoundland and Labrador.**

As a province, we compete with other national and international jurisdictions for business investment and attraction. We must be more aggressive in this area if we are to build up our economy. While the province attends many global tradeshows, our efforts are perceived weaker than many other provinces.

To educate national and international investors to come to Newfoundland and Labrador we must increase our promotional activities. A sophisticated and well-prepared national and international marketing initiative is essential. A Liberal Government will develop a long-range strategic marketing plan equal to our tourism initiatives. The primary objective will be to position the province as an attractive location for investment and doing business.

- *Creation of a Department of Economic Development*

**A Liberal Government will combine the Departments of Industry and Trade, and Business, and transfer all duties to a new super department that will be called the Department of Economic Development.**

Currently, the provincial government has two departments responsible for economic development initiatives: the Department of Industry and Trade, and the Department of Business. There has been criticism that there is a duplication of service between the departments and the job can be done under one body. The money that can be saved from this duplication of personnel and resources is estimated to be in the millions, money that should be re-invested back into business development initiatives in the province.

- *Graving dock for the Burin Peninsula*

**A Liberal Government will invest in graving dock facilities for the Burin Peninsula in an effort to improve the facility's overall attractiveness in competing for major shipbuilding contracts.**

A graving dock for the Burin Peninsula would improve the attractiveness of the site for major shipbuilding contracts. The shipyard is currently competing with other provinces to land major contracts from the federal government and this type of infrastructure would help attract major national and international contracts, create new employment and generate new economic opportunity on the Burin Peninsula.



- *Monthly payroll assessments for the Workplace Health, Safety and Compensation Commission*

**A Liberal Government will provide business owners in the province with the option of filing monthly payroll assessments to the Workplace Health, Safety and Compensation Commission.**

Business operators have spoken and have indicated that Newfoundland and Labrador should improve the system of submitting payroll assessments to the Workplace Health, Safety and Compensation Commission. Many employers want the option of submitting monthly payroll assessments versus the current annual assessment. A similar change has been made in New Brunswick at the request of business operators in that province, which has been viewed as more efficient and business friendly.

- *Succession planning for business*

**A Liberal Government will work with business owners to find ways to encourage the establishment of effective succession plans to ensure small businesses remain in operation after their owners retire.**

Small business is vital to the economy of Newfoundland and Labrador. As our population ages, many small business owners are preparing to retire. Due to a lack of succession planning with nobody to take over the business, a percentage of small businesses could close resulting in layoffs. It is anticipated that approximately 65 percent of small business owners will retire in the next five to ten years with very few having a succession plan in place to ensure their business stays alive.

- *Expanding our technology sector*

**A Liberal Government will work with NATI and industry representatives to review technology grant and assistance programs to determine whether enough emphasis is being placed on generating opportunities for the new technology-based economy.**

**A Liberal Government will work with industry to expand high speed internet services to rural areas of the province.**

The world is changing and technology is becoming more important than ever. Newfoundland and Labrador must keep up with this new economy and look for opportunities wherever possible to expand our businesses and attract new investment.

### Tourism

- *Funding cultural industries*

**A Liberal Government recognizes the importance of our cultural and heritage industries and will work with those involved to ensure sufficient funding and programs are available to meet the tourism demand.**

Our cultural and heritage industries have significantly grown our tourism sector over the past number of years. Tourists have expressed their desire to experience our unique culture and way of life, and our people have risen to the challenge. This sector of our economy is generating new growth and employment, and tourists are receiving an experience of a lifetime.

- *Expanding the season*

**A Liberal Government will invest to expand year-round tourism opportunities and undertake a significant local, national and international tourism campaign to attract tourists to our province.**

While the summer season has traditionally been the most lucrative portion of Newfoundland and Labrador tourism, new opportunities have been identified to expand the season into fall, winter and spring. Our province has much to offer tourists year-round, whether it be skiing or snowmobiling in the winter, to enjoying the natural beauty of our province in spring and fall.

- *Investing in tourist infrastructure*

**A Liberal Government will work with industry to ensure the demand being placed on our tourism infrastructure is being met, and seek out opportunities where new growth can take place.**

To encourage tourists to come to our province and spread the word about the many things that Newfoundland and Labrador has to offer, the appropriate tourism infrastructure must be in place. This will ensure that tourists have an enjoyable experience and make return visits with their family and friends.

- *Regional event sponsorship and promotion funding*

**A Liberal Government will partner with regional festivals and events to ensure sponsorship funding is available and promotional activities take place throughout the province.**

Regional festivals and events have grown dramatically over the past several years. There are now weekly festivals that provide tourists with an opportunity to experience the unique culture and heritage throughout every region of our province. These events must be encouraged and promoted to ensure their long-term viability.

- *Expanding our eco-tourism potential*

**A Liberal Government will encourage and create the conditions for eco-tourism activities that are environmentally friendly and provide tourists with a unique adventure in the Newfoundland and Labrador environment.**

Ecological tourism is a growing activity among those wanting an adventure that allows the participant to truly appreciate the natural environment and beauty of our province. Many areas of Newfoundland and Labrador have natural beauty and wildlife that is off the beaten track. This aspect of our tourism sector has much potential amongst those wishing to take part in an environmentally friendly and unique adventure.

- *Voucher incentive for gulf ferry vehicular tourists making it easier to visit*

**A Liberal Government will establish a \$100 voucher program for tourists who travel to Newfoundland and Labrador in vehicles via the Marine Atlantic ferry.**

Tourists who arrive in Newfoundland and Labrador via the Marine Atlantic ferry tend to travel to various regions and communities throughout our province. While they are here, they spend money that makes its way into provincial coffers and creates employment and business opportunities for our people. To grow this important aspect of tourism, new incentives must be found that will encourage travellers to explore our province.

*Labour*

- *Re-instatement of public service sick days and benefits*

**A Liberal Government will negotiate in good faith with our public sector workers to ensure that fair and equitable agreements are reached that demonstrate the importance of these workers.**

**A Liberal Government will re-instate sick leave and other benefits stripped by the Williams Government during the last round of collective bargaining.**

In 2004, the Williams Government legislated public sector employees back to work with wage freezes and stripped their contracts, especially sick leave benefits. Public sector workers have fought hard to achieve these benefits during contract negotiations over the years and contract stripping should not be tolerated. This approach has not helped instill confidence in the public service and has done nothing to address the recruitment and retention of workers. A system that provides new employees with fewer benefits than that of existing employees is unfair. A two-tiered benefit system is punitive and amounts to union busting.



3.

*Growing Rural  
Newfoundland and Labrador*

### Chapter 3 - Growing Rural Newfoundland and Labrador

The Liberal Party of Newfoundland and Labrador is committed to growing the economy of rural areas of the province to ensure the long-term survival of our traditional communities. Rural Newfoundland and Labrador has been forgotten by the Williams Government over the past four years. Instead of acting to address the alarming issue of outmigration, this government moved forward with an agenda of service reductions, office closures and layoffs that devastated many rural communities.

The Liberal Party of Newfoundland and Labrador is committed to and realizes that a strong Newfoundland and Labrador needs a strong and vibrant rural economy. To achieve this, government must ensure that the appropriate services and opportunities are in place to encourage people to stay in rural areas and attract new people to move into these regions.

Rural Newfoundland and Labrador is at a critical stage in its history. Real action has to take place immediately if we are to revitalize and save our rural communities. The Liberal Prosperity Fund will invest hundreds of millions of dollars in creating a vibrant rural Newfoundland and Labrador economy. This will ensure that the wealth from our offshore oil is distributed where it is needed most...in rural areas. The plan will focus on decentralizing decision-making to rural people; providing them with the tools and conditions to control their own destiny; build infrastructure; improve health and education facilities and opportunities; and provide business opportunities to stimulate the economy based on resources and new ventures.

- *The Prosperity Fund...A long-term action plan*

**A Liberal Government will establish a Prosperity Fund in which a percentage of oil and gas revenues will be directed in a three-way economic strategy to create progress and prosperity for the future. This fund will be used to strengthen services and opportunities, and direct oil and gas benefits to all regions of our province.**

As noted earlier, rural Newfoundland and Labrador has been forgotten by the PC Government over the past four years. The premier said that he had a plan for rural areas of our province, but four years later we have only witnessed service reductions, layoffs and the depopulation of our rural communities. Outmigration is taking place at an alarming rate. Many people throughout Newfoundland and Labrador have stated that they are not seeing the benefits of their oil and gas resources, especially rural areas. Our plan ensures that everyone in the province benefits from oil and gas resource development.

The projected revenues over the next decade from our oil and gas resources presents a special opportunity, first, to address our social and infrastructure deficit; second, to stimulate business development; and third, to pay down debt.

A designated percentage of the **Prosperity Fund** will be used for specific initiatives such as strengthening services for our people, an initiative that will ensure that all regions of our province have strong and immediate access to necessities such as healthcare and education. Funding will be set aside to ensure that specialized equipment and the recruitment and retention of health care professionals, especially in rural areas, is addressed. It will ensure that educational opportunities are available to all students, regardless of where they live in the province.

Other aspects of this strategy will include funding to alleviate unnecessary costs faced by the business community; provide incentives that would encourage new growth and economic development; and establish a more aggressive business attraction and development initiative. This will ensure that businesses see the benefit of special initiatives that will make doing business in our province more attractive.

The third component of this strategy involves addressing fiscal priorities such as debt servicing.

This province will see increased benefits from our offshore oil and gas resources in the coming years and we must act now to address priorities for our people. Oil revenues have a certain lifespan and addressing these priority issues should be of greatest importance.

The establishment of this fund is a strategic investment that defines what the Liberal Party will do with a percentage of oil and gas revenues while we are experiencing this period of prosperity. To date, the Williams Government has shown no defined plan and act on an ad hoc basis when making funding decisions.

Between 30 and 40 per cent of oil and gas royalties are predicted to be placed in the **Prosperity Fund**, but a full review of royalty projections would have to take place before a definitive percentage can be finalized.

By establishing this **Prosperity Fund**, all Newfoundlanders and Labradorians in all regions of our province will benefit. The people of Newfoundland and Labrador deserve to see direct benefit from their oil and gas wealth. This is one piece of a plan that will distribute oil and gas wealth throughout the entire province and help rejuvenate rural areas.

- *Strengthening rural services*

**A Liberal Government will invest in government services to maintain and strengthen access to these services throughout rural Newfoundland and Labrador.**

Since the Williams Government came to office, an agenda of rural cuts has dominated its budgetary process. The Liberal Party believes that a key to strengthening rural areas is strengthening government services. To achieve this, a designated percentage of the **Prosperity Fund** will be used for specific initiatives such as strengthening services for our people, an initiative that will ensure that all regions of our province have strong and immediate access to necessities such as healthcare and education. Funding will be set aside to ensure that specialized equipment and the recruitment and retention of health care professionals, especially in rural areas, is addressed. It will ensure that educational opportunities are available to all students, regardless of where they live in the province.

- *Establish a Department of Rural Sustainability*

**A Liberal Government will establish a Department of Rural Sustainability that will work closely with the Department of Economic Development to oversee and strongly represent the issues and priorities of rural Newfoundland and Labrador around the cabinet table.**

The Williams Government has only paid lip service to the problems of outmigration, job creation

and rural development for the past four years. While the Premier publicly touted his plan for rural Newfoundland and Labrador during the last election campaign, he has yet to bring forth any real initiatives. The Liberal Party feels that the issues of rural parts of our province are being lost with the current administration. Ministers are either too busy, do not understand their portfolio or do not care about the issues facing rural residents. More emphasis must be placed on finding opportunities, curbing outmigration and keeping our people at home.

- *Rural cell phone service*

**A Liberal Government will work with private sector investors to establish new communications towers that will distribute cell phone service to rural areas of the province currently excluded.**

Many areas of rural Newfoundland and Labrador do not currently have access to cell phone service. There is a definite need to provide this service to all residents of the province for health and safety reasons.

- *\$5,000 grant for volunteer fire departments*

**A Liberal Government will provide volunteer fire departments throughout the province with a \$5,000 operating grant to sustain their fire protection services.**

The vast majority of fire departments throughout Newfoundland and Labrador are run by dedicated and committed volunteers. The fire fighters who risk their lives are not paid for what they do, but instead focus on the rewards of saving lives. Even though these risks are great, many of the province's fire departments struggle to keep operating each year.

- *Population Growth Secretariat*

**A Liberal Government will establish a Population Growth Secretariat and develop a comprehensive plan to promote population growth which includes targeted financial incentives to raise a family in the province.**

Action must be taken to stem the population decline that is happening in this province. This can be accomplished through a comprehensive plan which encourages people to stay in this province, as well as encouraging those who have moved away to return home. The plan should also include a welcoming immigration policy and financial incentives, similar to those offered in the province of Quebec, to encourage people to raise a family in the province.



4.

*Effective Resource Development  
for our People*



## Chapter 4 - Effective Resource Development for our People

The Liberal Party of Newfoundland and Labrador is committed to effectively developing our natural resources for the benefit of our people. Our fishery, forestry, agriculture, mineral and oil and gas industries are the driving force behind our economy.

Unfortunately, the Williams Government has done nothing to bolster and improve these important resource development sectors. The economy of Newfoundland and Labrador is surviving as a result of Liberal projects, namely Hibernia, Terra Nova, White Rose and Voisey's Bay. The fishery came to a virtual standstill because of this government's refusal to listen to fish harvesters and instead imposed a raw material sharing program that proved to be a dismal failure.

There has been much rhetoric from government related to resource development, but the people of Newfoundland and Labrador know that the Liberal Party has a track record of reaching good deals that provide significant benefits and opportunities to our people.

A Liberal government will neither refuse to negotiate, nor insult our potential business partners, and is committed to working towards developing our resources in a manner that provides significant benefits, new opportunities and new economic development for the people of Newfoundland and Labrador.

### The Fishery

- *Provincial control over licensing and resource allocation*

**A Liberal Government will aggressively pursue complete control over the resource management and licensing of our adjacent fishery resource, while leaving enforcement and science to the federal government.**

The Williams Government has been embroiled in many recent fights with Ottawa; however, the fishery is not one of these disputes. The people of Newfoundland and Labrador must have a say in their fishery resources. An MOU must be signed with the federal government giving our province control over resource allocations surrounding the waters of our province.

- *Consultative decision-making*

**A Liberal Government will consult with fish harvesters before making any decisions affecting the fishing industry in this province.**

Even though Premier Williams committed to consult with fish harvesters before any decisions were made that affected their livelihoods, he broke his commitment and implemented the ill-thought out Raw Material Sharing program with no consultation with fish harvesters. That process turned out to be an absolute disaster and threw our fishery into chaos.

- *Raw Material Sharing (RMS) legislation*

**A Liberal Government will ensure that RMS legislation will never be brought to the House of Assembly without the support of fish harvesters.**

Fish harvesters in our province have spoken loudly that they do not support the RMS system. The Williams Government forced this system down the throats of fish harvesters without any consultation and against their will. The result was a lost fishing season that devastated many families in this province.

- *Technology assistance*

**A Liberal Government will assist in technological development in the primary and secondary processing sector by providing up to 50 percent of the cost on new equipment.**

Technology is vital to growing and updating our fishing industry. With state-of-the-art equipment, our processing sector will compete globally and reduce costs. This will make our fishing industry more stable for the future.

- *Seafood marketing council*

**A Liberal Government will provide \$3 million to establish a Seafood Marketing Council.**

Marketing our fishing industry around the world is extremely important to ensure our products are known and competitive. By establishing a seafood marketing council, agents would work with respective embassies to determine detail market pricing for existing products and the potential of emerging species. The council would establish ten marketing agents in key countries such as Japan, Hong Kong, Germany, England, Mainland China, Korea, Mexico, Russia, Poland and Spain. These agents would examine the marketplace in each country for a six-month period, then provide this information to industry and union representatives during the following six-month period in an effort to develop marketing strategies.

- *Diversification*

**A Liberal Government will work with the federal government and industry to develop initiatives that will encourage the growth and attractiveness of fishing for underdeveloped species.**

The Newfoundland and Labrador fishery has experienced significant change over the past four years. Market conditions have affected both the price and competitiveness of certain processors. In seeking new opportunities, government must place more emphasis on developing new species. Whelk and other underdeveloped species have new potential and government should work to grow these industries.

- *Exploratory Development Fund*

**A Liberal Government will establish an Exploratory Development Fund where harvesters can avail of funding to purchase gear for use in underutilized fisheries.**

There is much potential in this province's fishery and new opportunities must be sought. Diversifying our fishery is necessary and fish harvesters must be encouraged to explore the potential of new species. To assist in this venture, government must provide assistance that will encourage new growth.

- *Early retirement and license buy-back*

**A Liberal Government will commit to an early retirement package for plant workers and a license buy-back program for fish harvesters.**

The Williams Government has given much lip service to the idea of early retirement and license buy-back programs; however, nothing has been accomplished to facilitate such initiatives. The Premier continuously states that provincial money is set aside for such a program, yet none of this money has been spent. A Liberal Government will ensure this money is invested into such initiatives which will allow older workers wanting to exit the fishery to do so with a level of respect and dignity, while those who remain will be in a better position to make sustainable incomes.

- *Foreign over fishing*

**A Liberal Government will advocate leaving North Atlantic Fisheries Organization (NAFO) and demand strong action from the federal government on foreign over fishing off our coast.**

An issue that certainly requires more attention at the provincial, national and international level is foreign over fishing and the need for stronger action from the federal government to protect fish stocks off our coast. It is obvious that NAFO is not working and remains ineffective. Unless changes are made, remaining a member of this organization will do nothing to protect our fishery for the long-term. More needs to be done.

- *Working to rebuild cod stocks*

**A Liberal Government will work with the federal government to strengthen fishery science and develop initiatives that will rebuild the province's cod stocks to a point that will once again sustain a commercial fishery.**

Codfish has long been the backbone of the Newfoundland and Labrador fishery. Since the moratorium in the 1990s, other fisheries have developed and filled part of the void left by the collapse of the cod fishery. To ensure that this important resource is once again a viable fishery, we must work with the federal government on fishery science and initiatives that will help rebuild this fishery.

- *Placing more emphasis on Aquaculture*

**A Liberal Government will work with industry to create value-added opportunities at our processing plants.**

**A Liberal Government will undertake a comprehensive review of existing infrastructure to determine whether it meets the increased demands of aquaculture growth, especially the roads system.**

**A Liberal Government will maintain a comprehensive listing of identified aquaculture sites in the province to share with prospective industry investors.**

**A Liberal Government will invest \$30 million over 3 years in new aquaculture capital investment.**

The aquaculture industry has been a successful and growing piece of the Newfoundland and Labrador fishery. New investment must be made to ensure aquaculture continues to be a strong part of our economy. To achieve this, several initiatives must be examined.

First, value-added opportunities must be investigated to see if more processing can be done in this province for the benefit of our workforce. Government must work with industry in an effort to have extra processing done locally and finished products leaving our fish plants.

Second, infrastructure needs must be evaluated. The increased pressures being placed on infrastructure such as roads on the Connaigre peninsula, for example, must be reviewed to determine whether the current situation meets the increased demands.

- *Sealing*

**A Liberal Government will continue to promote and invest funding to ensure the long-term stability of the sealing industry in Newfoundland and Labrador.**

The sealing industry has played a significant role in the province's history and economy for hundreds of years. The Liberal Party recognizes the importance of the sealing industry in Newfoundland and Labrador and will ensure that the appropriate resources are available to invest into the protection of this industry.

*Mining*

*-Ensure stable and consistent policy and taxation framework*

**A Liberal Government will maintain a consistent and stable mineral policy and taxation framework to clearly state the guidelines for developing mineral deposits in Newfoundland and Labrador.**

Mineral policy in Newfoundland and Labrador has developed through consultation with industry over the past 50 years. Many believe that the current policy and taxation framework in this province is fair and competitive. As a result, projects such as Voisey's Bay, IOC, Wabush Mines

and Duck Pond have become a reality, providing significant benefits to the people of Newfoundland and Labrador. The Liberal Party will continue to work with industry to ensure there is a stable and competitive business climate in our mining sector to encourage new development.

- *Strengthen the Mineral Incentive Program*

**A Liberal Government will review the Mineral Incentive Program (MIP) to seek out additional opportunities to strengthen this program for the long-term future of the province's mineral industry.**

The MIP has proven to be a successful initiative for the mineral sector of our province. Even though the Williams Government cut funding for this program in their first year of office, they soon realized this was a mistake and re-instated the funding the following year. The Liberal Party introduced this program in 1999 and believes there is great potential in our mineral industry. Through the three components of the MIP, the Prospectors Assistance Program, the Junior Company Exploration Assistance Program and the Dimension Stone Incentive Program, there is much potential for new mineral discoveries in Newfoundland and Labrador. A strengthened MIP will only improve these opportunities.

*Oil and Gas*

- *Stabilizing the policy and royalty framework*

**A Liberal Government will provide stable and internationally competitive regulatory, policy and royalty frameworks for offshore oil and natural gas development.**

Industry has often stated their concern that the province continues to change its position in negotiations and that they cannot be certain what the policy and royalty framework of the provincial government will be from one day to the next. To compete internationally, this province must have a strong regulatory regime and competitive taxation regime.

- *Hebron-Ben Nevis and Hibernia South*

**A Liberal Government will negotiate in good faith on Hebron-Ben Nevis and Hibernia South and stay at the negotiating table as long as necessary in an effort to reach the best deals on our oil and gas projects that will maximize benefits to the province.**

The momentum in our offshore oil and gas industry has suffered over the past 18 months because of the delay in reaching agreements on Hebron-Ben Nevis and Hibernia South. While a Memorandum of Understanding has been reached on Hebron-Ben Nevis, many questions still remain that must be answered. These projects must go forward, but not at any cost. The Liberal Party will continue working to develop these resource projects to ensure that maximum financial, skills transfer and employment benefits accrue to this province.

- *Equity vs. Royalty*

**A Liberal Government would not take an equity stake in offshore oil and gas projects, but would instead focus on generating maximum benefit from a revamped royalty regime,**

**associated taxation and employment opportunities.**

There have been no concrete economic analyses completed that show that taking an equity position in offshore projects would be better than a revamped royalty regime. With an equity stake, the province would have to take an up-front risk in each project. A revamped royalty regime removes the up-front risk from projects and would likely result in larger monetary and spin-off benefits from oil and gas projects. There is also fear that employment benefits may be traded off to secure equity.

- *Commitment to grow new exploration*

**A Liberal Government will return investor confidence in the province's offshore petroleum industry that will encourage new exploration projects.**

The key to more discoveries and new projects in our offshore industry is active exploration. Unfortunately, due to the Premier's confrontational approach, new exploration bids have dropped by over \$600 million since the Williams Government came to office. Our investment climate is certainly not being viewed positively by international investors. This is hurting many service and supply companies, some are leaving, and we have lost significant momentum in our efforts to build a strong and stable oil and gas industry.

- *Exploiting the potential of Natural Gas*

**A Liberal Government will develop and implement a competitive natural gas royalty regime after consultation with industry and key stakeholders. This royalty framework must be internationally competitive and maximize benefits to the people of the province.**

Delays in developing a natural gas royalty regime over the past four years by the Williams Government have hindered industry's interest in developing the province's natural gas resources. This royalty framework must be developed and implemented after the proper level of consultation has taken place to ensure we are internationally competitive, while maximizing benefits to the people of the province.

*Agriculture Maximizing our Potential*

- *Fostering diversification and growth*

**A Liberal Government will work closely in partnership with industry and make the necessary investment to diversify the agriculture sector and create new opportunities and jobs with the many products that can be produced in Newfoundland and Labrador.**

Agriculture development in Newfoundland and Labrador has grown significantly and has increased employment opportunities in our province over the past number of years. The potential for the development of new products in our province is substantial and we must maximize these new opportunities. We need to work more closely with agri-business and to encourage their ideas and initiatives that will lead to more development and secondary processing in the province.

- *Agricultural Summit*

**A Liberal Government will hold an Agricultural Summit with key stakeholders to lay the foundation for expanding and diversifying this important industry to ensure future growth and opportunities.**

There is significant potential in our agricultural industry and a more flexible partnership must be developed between stakeholders and government. A major summit will take place that will determine the future direction of government investment in new agricultural opportunities throughout Newfoundland and Labrador. The needs and ideas of the agricultural industry must be heard and implemented.

Forestry

- *Implementing a forestry land management agreement*

**A Liberal Government will implement a forestry land management agreement that will identify forestry resources for the province's pulp and paper industry, independent sawmills, and outfitters.**

Forest management has become an increasingly important issue in Newfoundland and Labrador. It is important for government to ensure there is a significant wood supply available for the pulp and paper industry and lumber industries, while identifying areas that should be excluded for any industrial use.

Electricity

- *Developing the Lower Churchill*

**A Liberal Government commits to pursuing the development of the Lower Churchill with all interested parties including the federal government, other provincial governments and private industry. Any deal will have to have 100% provincial ownership; a guaranteed escalator clause; appropriate recall power for use in Labrador; maximum benefits for Newfoundland and Labrador during design and construction; a guarantee that our province would own 100% of any and all greenhouse gas emission credits. Any project would also have to receive input and support from our aboriginal peoples.**

The Lower Churchill project is a very exciting opportunity for the people of Newfoundland and Labrador. Successive governments have tried to develop this project; however, the right deal was not achieved. Recent discussions have once again fueled interest in this project and further attempts will be made in the near future.

- *Putting wind power to work*

**A Liberal Government will encourage more private sector investment and work towards establishing wind power as a significant renewable energy source in Newfoundland and Labrador.**

The Liberal Party recognizes the importance that wind power can play in the future of renewable energy initiatives for our province. In 2003, the Liberal Government approved a wind power project in St. Lawrence and is confident this can become a significant industry for our province. Several proponents have already expressed their interest in developing large-scale commercial wind power projects and a Liberal Government will continue to promote the development of this renewable energy resource.





5.

*Making  
Health Care Work*

## Chapter 5 - Making Health Care Work

The Liberal Party of Newfoundland and Labrador is committed to improving health care services and infrastructure for the people of our province. Whether it be access to medical advice, services, equipment or drugs, something must be done to ensure that our health care system does not deteriorate and is, indeed, improved.

The Liberal Party of Newfoundland and Labrador is committed to strengthening access to health care services for all Newfoundlanders and Labradorians in all regions of our province.

- *Recruiting and retaining more health care professionals*

**A Liberal Government will develop new monetary initiatives to encourage health care professionals to live and practice in Newfoundland and Labrador.**

Many hospitals and clinics throughout the province are facing shortages of health care professionals. These individuals are vital to ensure that illnesses are diagnosed and treated; testing is completed in an accurate and efficient manner; and service is provided when needed. Unfortunately, surgeries are being cancelled due to shortages; nurses are not able to receive vacation time; and hospital rooms remain empty. Strong financial initiatives must be put in place to encourage the recruitment and retention of health care professionals. The Liberal Party will address this pressing need and ensure that more health care professionals decide to work in Newfoundland and Labrador.

- *Providing a student loan rebate program for health care professionals*

**A Liberal Government will introduce a student loan rebate program for health care professionals to encourage them to stay and work in Newfoundland and Labrador. For each year that an individual stays in the province to work, a percentage of their student debt will be forgiven. The longer a health care professional stays in the province, the more debt that will be forgiven.**

New ways must be found to encourage health care professionals to work in Newfoundland and Labrador. Many graduates are facing significant student debt loads after years in university programs and often cite this as a reason for leaving the province. This should no longer be a reason for health care professionals to leave.

- *Investing in modern and updated equipment*

**A Liberal Government will ensure that money is invested to upgrade and modernize equipment needed for health care diagnostics throughout the province.**

To have reliability in our health care system, patients must have faith that diagnostic equipment is state-of-the-art. To ensure that modern equipment is available, investment must be made to ensure that all health diagnostic equipment is in good working order to avoid inaccurate testing. The Liberal Party will ensure appropriate and needed equipment is available to patients.

- *Acquisition of PET Scan for cancer patients*

**A Liberal Government will immediately purchase a PET scan for cancer patients in Newfoundland and Labrador.**

A proven technology in the battle with cancer is a PET scan. While many provinces now have such an effective and modern technology for detecting cancer, Newfoundland and Labrador does not have such a machine. Cancer patients in this province are forced to travel to other provinces to have such testing completed. This is unacceptable and cancer patients in this province should have immediate access at home, as do Canadians in other provinces.

- *Establishing a province-wide 911 emergency service*

**A Liberal Government will work towards the establishment of a province-wide emergency 911 service for every region of Newfoundland and Labrador.**

The 911 emergency service has proven to be a significant health and safety benefit that has prevented the loss of life in many circumstances. Currently, the St. John's and Corner Brook regions are the only areas serviced by a 911 line. In this modern era, everyone in the province should have access to a functioning 911 service to call in the case of emergencies.

- *Expanding travel coverage for medical procedures*

**A Liberal Government will expand the medical travel subsidy program for patients needing to avail of medical services inside and outside the province.**

Many medical procedures must be completed outside Newfoundland and Labrador because of a lack of facilities, infrastructure, resources or programs. While some of the travel costs associated with these various medical procedures are covered through MCP, other costs are not. For some people, this makes the cost of availing of certain medical procedures outside the province prohibitive.

Others requiring health services within the province do not receive re-imburement for private vehicle usage when traveling long distances to medical facilities for treatment and appointments. This has a significant impact on those patients who travel from their home community to a larger centre. For patients requiring treatment on a regular and frequent basis, these costs place a significant financial hardship on individuals and families. Something must be done to lower this financial burden that is most often placed on rural residents.

- *Re-evaluating the size of health care boards*

**A Liberal Government will re-evaluate the Williams Government decision to reduce the number of health care boards from fourteen to four, and determine the effectiveness of super boards, especially Eastern Health.**

In 2004, the Williams Government re-organized the province's health care system into four super regional health care boards. The increased size of these boards is placing increased burden on our professional staff and creating problems of travel and communication.

- *Appointing patient advocates*

**A Liberal Government will appoint independent patient advocates to all hospital boards to better represent the needs of families and patients, and participate in the decision-making process.**

With the unfortunate disclosure that health board representatives and government officials, including Ministers of the Crown who remained silent after being made aware of problems in the health care system, there is an obvious need for patients to have direct representation in the decision-making process.

- *Increasing availability of heart defibrillators*

**A Liberal Government will ensure all ambulances and emergency vehicles, as well as all public places where large numbers of people gather, are equipped with automatic heart defibrillators. Steps will also be taken to train personnel to use these defibrillators.**

Heart disease is one of the leading causes of death in Newfoundland and Labrador. Unfortunately, many lives are lost because too much time has passed before life saving equipment such as a defibrillator is used. This vital piece of health care equipment should be made as widely available as possible.

- *Removal of HST on home care services*

**A Liberal Government will remove the provincial portion of the HST from home support services.**

Individuals requiring home support are now forced to pay the HST on the service. For many people on fixed incomes, this extra tax can be a burden. Patients should not have to pay tax on home support.

- *Reducing wait times for home care*

**A Liberal Government will reduce the period of time it takes to get assessments completed and home care service provided.**

There are many problems in our home care sector that must be addressed. Many individuals looking to receive home care services are often forced to wait long periods of time until an assessment can be completed. This is a very frustrating and inconvenient process that must be addressed.

- *Increased wages for home care support workers*

**A Liberal Government, after a comprehensive review, will increase the salaries paid to home support workers to ensure that home care becomes an attractive career option and there are enough trained workers to look after the demands of an aging population.**

The provincial government is certainly aware of the low wages and increasing responsibilities of

our home care support workers. As our population ages, more demands will be placed on our home care support system. With the low wages that are currently being paid, many of these workers are making different career choices. If nothing is done to address the low wages paid to these workers, there will almost certainly be a shortage of home support workers in the near future. Government is saving money by encouraging shorter hospital stays, yet they are not re-investing these savings into the people who look after patients once they are discharged.

- *Overtime incentives for health care workers*

**A Liberal Government will provide a tax incentive to health care workers who are forced to work overtime hours.**

With the shortage of qualified health care professionals in our province, increased workloads are being placed on our existing workers. As a result, many professionals are forced to work overtime hours. While these people spend additional time at work, the extra pay they receive is often clawed back through income taxes. Incentives should be implemented that will reward our dedicated professionals for committing their time to our health care system.

- *Reduce ambulance fees*

**A Liberal Government will reduce the cost of road and air ambulance services to the pre-2004 level.**

In the 2004 Budget, the Williams Government significantly increased the cost of ambulance services. While the province is reaping record profits from our oil and gas revenues, the price of an ambulance trip has not dropped. Newfoundlanders and Labradorians should not have to worry about excessive fees when requiring the service of an ambulance.

- *Improved health care communications system for ambulances*

**A Liberal Government will improve communications systems to ensure ambulances can communicate effectively with emergency support agencies.**

To ensure decisions can be made quickly during emergency situations, ambulances must be equipped with state-of-the-art communications technology. Oftentimes, life and death situations are faced by paramedics who need immediate advice from health care professionals.

- *Reducing wait times*

**A Liberal Government will work with the federal government to ensure the health care system in Newfoundland and Labrador is accessible and provides a quality and timely service that is equal to that of every other region of Canada.**

A major health care concern of the people of Newfoundland and Labrador continues to be the time it takes to receive a diagnosis until appropriate treatments are received. While federal money has been earmarked to address this national issue, wait times are still too long for people living in this province.



6.

*Renewing  
our Education System*

## Chapter 6 Renewing our Education System

The Liberal Party of Newfoundland and Labrador is committed to making education accessible to all students in our province, regardless of geography or financial capacity. All students in our K-12 system should have access to courses and instruction that all other students have the option to receive. Post-secondary students should also have access to opportunities regardless of their financial resources.

The Liberal Party of Newfoundland and Labrador is committed to an equal access education system that provides equal opportunity to every student.

### Early Childhood

*- Early Childhood education*

**A Liberal Government will fight for the reinstatement of the 2005 agreement signed with the federal government to develop a comprehensive early child development program.**

**A Liberal Government will, in consultation with the child care sector, take action to address recruitment and retention issues in early childhood education.**

Liberals recognize the importance of early childhood education. The future of our progress as a province depends upon the development of our children at an early age. We believe there should be standard programs for childhood development across our province and country. We also appreciate the need to take action to address problems related to recruitment and retention in the early childhood education field.

### K-12

*-Provide appropriate technology to all high schools*

**A Liberal Government will supply distance education technology to every high school in the province so that every student will have an opportunity to take the same basic courses.**

With declining enrolments, there is a widening gap between course offerings available to rural students and urban students. While many urban students have the choice of doing advanced courses, sciences and French, for example, that prepare them for university and college entry, rural students often find themselves with limited choices. This discrepancy must end so that all students have the opportunity to take the same basic courses, no matter where they live in the province.

*- Revamp teacher allocation and expand support staff*

**A Liberal Government will implement a new needs-based teacher allocation that represents the needs and interests of students and schools throughout Newfoundland and Labrador. It will also expand the program to provide secretarial, maintenance, and other support staff for schools.**

The current teacher allocation is not working for our students, especially in rural schools. The current allocation does not take into account the significant demands being placed on our classroom teachers. Instead of recognizing the needs of every student, government has continued to follow an allocation that is outdated and does not reflect the changing demographics of Newfoundland and Labrador. While new studies have been done on the best way to change the teacher allocation, government has refused to act.

- *Curriculum review*

**A Liberal Government will conduct a full review of K-12 curriculum, especially the math program, to determine whether it is meeting the needs of students in the province's school system.**

While curriculum in the K-12 system has developed over a number of years and through extensive consultation, periodic analyses must be undertaken to ensure our students are receiving the best education possible. For example, many parents and students have complained that the new math program is not looking after the best interests of our students. These issues must be discussed and action taken.

- *Pre-apprenticeship partnerships*

**A Liberal Government will work with industry to create pre-apprenticeship initiatives that will encourage students to prepare for entry into the trades.**

There is a growing shortage of skilled tradespeople in our province to meet the demand currently being placed on this sector of our economy. While wage issues are one of the main concerns, something must be done to encourage our young people to choose skilled trades as a career option.

- *Improved and consistent air quality testing*

**A Liberal Government will ensure that air quality in schools will be tested at least once a year and appropriate action taken to correct deficiencies.**

Several schools across the province have been closed due to mould and poor air quality over the past several months. As a result, students have been forced to interrupt their education and relocate to other schools. It is evident that the confidence level of teachers and parents has been eroded and many are experiencing much anxiety and stress with respect to this issue. Only an immediate and comprehensive air quality review of all schools will restore any level of comfort and ensure students and staff are not being exposed to the risk of indoor contaminants.

*Post-secondary*

- *25 percent tuition reduction*

**A Liberal Government will implement a further 25 percent reduction in tuition costs at our public institutions during our first-term in office.**



Past Liberal Governments have put an emphasis on making post-secondary education more affordable. The previous Liberal Administration reduced tuition rates at our public institutions by 25 percent and committed to finding other initiatives to lower the costs for students.

- *Improved grant system*

**A Liberal Government will improve the grant system to address costs surrounding tuition, books and living expenses. Students will be formally consulted in the process of improving the system.**

Students have told us that they want an improved grant system in addition to student loans. This will make post-secondary education more accessible for all students and reduce the financial burden that students will have to repay once their studies are completed. Subsidies must also be analyzed to determine whether students forced to travel to school from other parts of the province, such as Labrador, can avail of extra funding to help with those costs. The financial costs related to tuition, living expenses, travel and books is too high and must be addressed.

- *Student housing*

**A Liberal Government will work with our post-secondary institutions in an effort to identify and address issues related to student housing.**

Many of our post-secondary students are finding it difficult to locate affordable student housing near their institution. This can place an extra burden and increased stress on students, especially those who are not familiar with the challenges of living in larger centres.

- *Expansion of Memorial University's medical school*

**A Liberal Government will allocate funding to allow the expansion of facilities and programming at the School of Medicine.**

Memorial University has a world-class and highly respected School of Medicine that attracts students from around the world. With increased funding, the university will be in a position to expand their facilities and accept more students into their medical programming.

- *Increased post-secondary course offerings*

**A Liberal Government will consult with students, Memorial University and the College of the North Atlantic to determine the feasibility of establishing second-year university course offerings in various regions of the province.**

There are currently several sites throughout the province that offer first-year university programming at College of the North Atlantic facilities. It has been proven that more students attend post-secondary education when costs are lowered and facilities are near their homes. It is important to provide these opportunities to students throughout Newfoundland and Labrador.

- *Tax relief for post-secondary graduates*

**A Liberal Government will provide new post-secondary graduates with a tax relief incentive. New graduates completing a recognized minimum two-year post-secondary program will pay no provincial income tax on their first \$100,000 of salary earned in Newfoundland and Labrador.**

This was a proposal that was made during the 2003 election campaign, but still has merit today. Initiatives must be taken to help students dealing with student loans, especially those who want to remain in Newfoundland and Labrador to work. Providing tax relief for post-secondary graduates who stay in our province to work would help grow our economy, encourage graduates to stay at home and provide much needed professional services to our people.

- *Interest free loans*

**A Liberal Government will examine an interest-free student loan system that ensures students are responsible for repaying principal payments and not excessive interest charges.**

Student loans are often the only means an individual has to pay for their post-secondary education. While government sponsored loans help during the timeframe a student is attending school, significant interest payments often hinder the repayment schedule once a student enters the workforce. Student loans should not be a money-making business for banks and governments, and this burden should be removed from students.

- *Adult Basic Education (ABE)*

**A Liberal Government will strengthen Adult Basic Education programs in the province by addressing accessibility, subsidization and daycare issues faced by prospective students.**

For many individuals looking to improve their education, ABE is the first step to receiving their high school diploma. While these people are trying to better themselves and get their education, obstacles are often presented that act as a deterrent. Government must address accessibility, subsidization and day care issues to ensure these programs are available to anyone wishing to improve their education.



7.

*Caring  
for Seniors*

## Chapter 7 - Caring for Seniors

The Liberal Party of Newfoundland and Labrador is committed to providing the appropriate level of service to the seniors of our province. Newfoundland and Labrador has an aging population and the demands placed on our nursing homes, home care workers and health services will increase dramatically in the coming years.

The Liberal Party of Newfoundland and Labrador is committed to developing a plan of action to deal with the issues of seniors in our province.

### - *Senior's Secretariat and senior's advisory council*

**A Liberal Government will establish a Senior's Secretariat which will incorporate the Division of Aging Seniors and continue the advisory council that will seek advice and direction from seniors and deal specifically with these issues.**

The population of Newfoundland and Labrador is aging and the needs of our seniors are growing. Our senior population has raised concerns that their issues are not being addressed significantly and that they are not receiving the appropriate level of attention expected from their government representatives. The Liberal Party has heard these concerns and will act immediately to give seniors a stronger voice in the decision-making process. Too many government decisions are made without the appropriate level of consultation and advice from our senior population. To effectively address issues that concern our seniors, these individuals must have a voice in the decision-making process.

### - *Public service pensioners*

**A Liberal Government will enter into negotiations with public sector unions and its pensioners to explore options to increase public service pension benefits to reflect increases to the cost of living.**

Retired public service pensioners have been left out by successive governments. While the cost of living continues to increase, many of our public service pensioners remain on a salary schedule that is outdated and does not reflect inflation. What may have been considered a fair pension salary twenty years ago is now below the poverty line. This is certainly not respectful to people who spent their lives working for the public of Newfoundland and Labrador, and this must be addressed.

### - *New seniors drug program*

**A Liberal Government will implement a new income-based drug program that provides coverage to eligible seniors 65 years of age and over and implement an annual co-pay cap.**

Many seniors in Newfoundland and Labrador do not have access to affordable drug coverage, even though our aging population needs drugs more than ever. Most of our seniors are on a fixed income and cannot afford these extra drug costs as their health deteriorates later in life.



*Ensuring Opportunity  
for Women*

## Chapter 8 Ensuring Opportunity for Women

The Liberal Party of Newfoundland and Labrador is committed to social and economic equality for all women throughout the province. To achieve this goal, we will take action on the following items.

- *Increasing investment in women's centres*

### **A Liberal Government will increase the investment to the eight women's centres in Newfoundland and Labrador.**

The Liberal Party of Newfoundland and Labrador recognizes the value of the work being done by our women's centres in helping women in need, fighting poverty issues and creating new opportunities. While the average amount of funding provided by government to operate these centres is \$75,000 a year, much more is needed. A Liberal Government is committed to ensuring that these centres receive more funding to deliver vital services and programs directly to the women of our province.

- *Increasing investment in crisis shelters*

### **A Liberal Government will increase the investment in crisis shelters for women.**

A Liberal Government implemented the Violence Prevention Initiative and while it has provided support, more needs to be done. These shelters provide front-line emergency services to women and children and are equipped to provide for the personal, emotional and mental needs of victims confronting a number of issues. The Liberal Party is committed to increasing the investment into these shelters to strengthen the programming and services offered to women.

- *Violence prevention initiatives*

### **A Liberal government will support an expanded violence prevention initiative in the province.**

Violence is a deeply engrained problem in society and government has a responsibility to work with all groups to change attitudes and work towards its prevention. This issue requires persistence, determination and commitment on the part of government to ensure the appropriate resources and funding are in place to curb violence.

- *Improving legal supports*

### **A Liberal Government will improve legal supports for women when dealing with the justice system in this province.**

More needs to be done to improve the legal support system specializing in justice issues facing women. Legal supports must be put in place that are primarily focused on the needs of women, especially when these women and their children are the victims of abuse and facing a justice system that does not always recognize their needs.

*- Equitable access in resource-based sectors*

**A Liberal Government will fund programs to encourage gender equity, public awareness campaigns and gender sensitivity training to facilitate a more inclusive workforce, particularly in science, trades and technology.**

Liberals believe women should have equal access to well-paying jobs in resource-based industries. To make this a reality, economic and social barriers to participation have to be removed.

*- Women in government*

**A Liberal Government will place more women on government agencies, boards and commissions and will also take actions to encourage female participation in elected positions at various levels of government.**

The Liberal Party recognizes the important and necessary role women play in the decision-making process. While many high-ranking women have been removed from high profile positions over the past four years, a Liberal Government is committed to bringing more women into the decision-making process in key executive positions throughout the civil service, boards, agencies, commissions and elected politics.



9.

*Working With  
and Respecting our Aboriginals*



## Chapter 9 Working With and Respecting our Aboriginals

The Liberal Party of Newfoundland and Labrador is committed to aboriginal issues and the rights of our First Nations people. Our Party respects the important role that our aboriginal people have played in the growth of our province and will ensure that all aboriginal groups are invited to the table as partners when decisions are being made regarding their lands, resources and issues.

### - *Consultation on resource development*

**A Liberal Government will consult with our aboriginal peoples before any resource development projects take place in Newfoundland and Labrador.**

Our aboriginal peoples deserve input on resource development on their traditional lands. No major projects should move forward without substantial discussion and negotiation to ensure that the concerns and issues of our Innu, Inuit, Metis and Mi'kmaq people are addressed.

### - *Respecting the rights of our Metis and Mi'kmaq people*

**A Liberal Government will respect the rights of our Metis and Mi'kmaq people in accessing federal programs and services to which they are entitled.**

**A Liberal Government will work with our Metis and Mi'kmaq people to ensure their issues receive appropriate attention by the province when decisions are being made.**

The Metis and Mi'kmaq people have not received the respect, attention and recognition they deserve on both the provincial and national level. While many commitments have been made by the provincial and federal governments, many of these commitments have been broken. In 2003, Danny Williams gave a written commitment to the province's Metis people regarding the Powley decision and broke it shortly thereafter. Our Metis and Mi'kmaq people deserve better.

### - *Finalize land claim with Innu*

**A Liberal Government will work with our Innu people to finalize land claims agreements in Labrador.**

The Liberal Party of Newfoundland and Labrador is a strong supporter of reaching agreements with our aboriginal peoples on land claims issues and will continue to do so in the future. Land claims issues with our Innu people in Labrador must be concluded and their claims appropriately addressed.

### - *Inuit land claims*

**A Liberal Government will continue to work with the Nunatsiavut Government in the implementation of Inuit land claims.**

A Liberal Government negotiated land claims agreements with our Labrador Inuit people. The

Liberal Party of Newfoundland and Labrador is committed to aboriginal rights and will continue to work with our Inuit people in the implementation of these historic agreements.

- *Metis land claims*

**A Liberal Government will negotiate land claims with the Labrador Metis Nation upon acceptance of their claims by the federal government.**

A Liberal Government recognizes the rights of our Metis people and will work to finalize land claims once the federal government has accepted their requests.



10.

*Giving Labrador  
its Fair Share*

## Chapter 10 - Giving Labrador its Fair Share

The Liberal Party of Newfoundland and Labrador is committed to giving Labrador its fair share of financial investment into infrastructure and services. The people of Labrador have felt for some time that general provincial coffers have benefited far more from their resource projects than they have benefited themselves.

A Liberal Government is committed to ensuring that Labradorians see direct benefits from the revenues generated by resource projects in their region.

### - *The Building Labrador Fund*

**A Liberal Government will establish a Building Labrador Fund in which \$1 billion in royalties from Labrador resource projects will be placed for investment back into Labrador initiatives over a ten-year period.**

Major resource development has been taking place throughout Labrador for several decades. Whether it is power from the Upper Churchill, iron ore mines in Labrador West or Voisey's Bay, resource projects have been generating many millions of dollars for the provincial treasury. It is anticipated that additional mining and power projects will be developed over the next twenty years.

While Labrador resources have been generating wealth for the provincial government for decades, many of the basic infrastructure needs of the region have not been addressed, such as the paving of roads and water and sewer services. This fund should also be able to leverage additional funds from the federal government. The Liberal Party recognizes that Labradorians have not been getting their fair share and will act to address this inequity.

### - *Paving Labrador highways*

**A Liberal Government will use money from the Building Labrador Fund to pave Labrador highways and ensure the appropriate level of infrastructure is available to the people of Labrador.**

There has been much rhetoric from the current government regarding the paving of Labrador highways. While the Williams Government has spent most of its time fighting with the federal government, very little has been done to pave the highways. Labradorians certainly know that chip seal and gravel roads are not the answer to future economic development.

### - *Federal/Provincial Highways Agreement*

**A Liberal Government will work to secure a Federal/Provincial Highways Agreement for Labrador.**

The damaged relationship between the provincial and federal governments has impacted the ability to secure funding to develop the Labrador highway system. While provincial money will be earmarked from the proposed Labrador Building Fund to develop highway infrastructure in Labrador, additional money is available through the federal government to help with this

process. This type of program is needed to ensure Labrador has a first-class highways system in a more timely manner.

- *New passenger and freight vessel for the North Coast*

**A Liberal Government will provide a new passenger and freight vessel to service the North Coast of Labrador by 2011.**

A new passenger and freight vessel with the capacity to service all northern Labrador communities is a growing necessity. People living in this region of our province know the need for this vessel and have asked government for this service. To accommodate this configuration, a new service will be designated between Black Tickle and Cartwright.

- *Expand the hydro rebate subsidy*

**A Liberal Government will expand the hydro rebate subsidy on the coast of Labrador to include small business.**

The current hydro rebate subsidy does not provide any relief to small business people on the coast of Labrador. Even though this region of our province is experiencing some of the highest electricity rates in the province, business people are forced to cut costs in order to afford electricity and heat for their businesses. This is hindering job creation, new investment and putting Labrador businesses on an unequal footing with the rest of the province. This inequity must be addressed and a Liberal Government will consult with stakeholders to determine an appropriate subsidy level.

- *Increasing government's presence in Labrador*

**A Liberal Government will increase government's presence in Labrador by opening regional offices for the Departments of Tourism, Culture and Recreation and Natural Resources.**

While Labrador's tourism and mineral potential is vast, the provincial government has not invested any significant resources to put people on the ground in Labrador. To truly understand and promote the issues of Labrador, government must open regional offices that provide real focus and information to those wanting to spend time and invest in this region of our province. The first two regional offices should focus on tourism activities and the mining and mineral potential of Labrador.

- *Labrador forestry*

**A Liberal Government will work with Labrador stakeholders to ensure forestry becomes a vital part of the economic infrastructure of Labrador.**

Since the closure of the Abitibi mill in Stephenville, many opportunities have been lost for Labradorians involved in the forestry sector. New opportunities must be found with a unique approach that will provide unique investment opportunities in Labrador. A Liberal Government

will work with stakeholders to develop new forestry potential in this region of our province.

- *Expand professional recruitment and retention bonus*

**A Liberal Government will expand the professional recruitment and retention bonus paid to nurses, teachers and social workers from L'Anse au Clair to Nain.**

Under the current policy, teachers living on the south coast of Labrador do not receive the recruitment and retention bonus paid to other professionals. Even though teachers from Lodge Bay to Nain receive this bonus, three schools on the south coast of Labrador are excluded. To encourage teachers to move to and stay on the south coast, this policy must be expanded to include all nurses, teachers and social workers from L'Anse au Clair to Nain.



11.

*Fighting  
Poverty*

## Chapter 11 - Fighting Poverty

Too many Newfoundlanders and Labradorians live in a poverty trap and do not have the necessary resources to break this cycle. The Liberal Party recognizes that real action is needed to tackle poverty and initiatives developed that involve everyone in society to develop the true potential of this province and our people. With this in mind, we are putting forward a comprehensive policy framework that addresses poverty issues. Liberals believe that people in poverty need a hand up, not a hand out.

### *- Making the Transition to Work*

**A Liberal Government will invest funds to improve the accessibility of transition to work programs.**

A Liberal Government believes that education programs are an important part of breaking the cycle of poverty and helping people enter the workforce and advancing in their jobs. Funding must be invested to improve these types of programs and ensure they are easily accessible to those needing to make this transition.

### *- Investing in literacy*

**A Liberal Government will invest an additional \$1 Million to enhance adult literacy training programs in this province.**

**A Liberal Government will work with other levels of government and community groups to develop and implement programs that deal with the literacy challenges facing many people in this province.**

Literacy is a human right that allows everyone to become an active participant in our society and leads to economic well-being and healthier living. Without the ability to read and write, there are significant barriers that diminish quality of life issues. Illiteracy rates in this province are too high and immediate action is needed to address this problem.

### *- Removing barriers to post-secondary education*

**A Liberal Government will review accessibility barriers for post-secondary education and work in co-operation with the federal government to bring forward programs that encourage and facilitate participation in post-secondary education.**

Improving accessibility to post-secondary education is an important part of ensuring that people living in poverty have an equal opportunity to participate in furthering their education. Nobody living in Newfoundland and Labrador should be refused educational training because of their financial status.



*- Income and employment supports*

**A Liberal Government will review the effectiveness of programs to assist people living in poverty as they enter the workforce, and introduce new programs to assist the working poor.**

One of the major steps in eliminating poverty is removing obstacles that provide people with an opportunity to find employment. This objective will only be realized if policies are developed that recognize the needs of the working poor. While many of these people have jobs, they face obstacles that force them to continue living in poverty.

*- Community employment initiatives*

**A Liberal Government will extend community based pre-employment services and community employment initiatives throughout the province.**

One way of helping individuals make the transition to the workforce is through the support of community employment initiatives that build employment skills. This will allow people to work on initiatives that benefit the community, while also allowing them to gain the necessary skills that will help them remain in the workforce.

*- Special programs for youth in poverty*

**A Liberal Government will increase and improve child care services in this province, including increased early literacy and school readiness opportunities for children, and improving health services for youth at risk.**

To break the cycle of poverty, we as a society have to be willing to invest in special programs for youth. There is a special need to enhance programs and services to children and youth so they are given an opportunity to reach their full potential. Liberals recognize the need for early intervention for children living in poverty.

*- Expansion of school lunch program*

**A Liberal Government will expand the school lunch program and work with community groups to identify other ways which the nutrition and health needs of children in poverty can be addressed.**

This province has one of the highest levels of food bank usage in the country and action is needed to ensure that children living in poverty get the food they need to grow and stay healthy. It has been proven that hungry children do not learn as easily as those who eat regular meals. Children should not have to worry what they will eat during the day, they should only have to worry about their learning.

*- Working with the volunteer sector*

**A Liberal Government will consult with volunteer groups to develop an action plan on**

**strengthening and helping to address the financial needs of various community groups so they can be more effective.**

A Liberal Government recognizes the importance of the volunteer sector in bringing about progress with our communities. Many things can be achieved through collective action when the various levels of government and community volunteers work together.

- *A new approach on disability issues*

**A Liberal Government will allocate the necessary financial resources to establish a Council on Disability Issues that will develop a comprehensive approach to dealing with issues affecting the province's disabled community.**

Many issues need to be addressed if persons with disabilities are to realize their full potential and inclusion in their communities. As Liberals, we are committed to including individuals with disabilities and their representatives in the development of policies and programs that affect their well-being. We believe there is a need to offer employment assistance for persons with disabilities, more flexible programming and services, as well as improving access to post-secondary education.

- *Affordable housing*

**A Liberal Government will recognize the links between affordable housing and the cycle of poverty and implement policies that refocus the direction of the Newfoundland and Labrador Housing Corporation to deal with social housing issues, and the needs of groups such as those with disabilities and the elderly.**

Safe and affordable housing is one of the basic rights of every Newfoundlander and Labradorian. The lack of quality housing is often part of a cycle of poverty and is at the root of many social problems including poor health and an unaffordable cost of living. Government must work to ensure affordable and accessible housing is available to everyone in society.



12.

*Fighting  
Addictions*

## Chapter 12 - Fighting Addictions

Addictions in society are very problematic and can ruin families and lives forever. Government must be proactive in battling the various addictions that exist in our society and ensure the proper programs and investments are in place to address addiction related issues.

### *- Drug abuse*

**A Liberal Government will implement a strategy to deal with drug addiction issues which include measures to restrict the supply of illegal drugs; working with police and community groups to implement public awareness campaigns about the dangers of drugs; and providing additional resources to implement treatment programs for those with addictions.**

Liberals recognize the need for immediate action to deal with drug addiction problems in this province. We recognize the important work done by groups such as the AIDS Committee of Newfoundland and Labrador and "Turnings" in relation to addiction issues in this province.

### *- Fighting drunk driving and alcohol abuse*

**A Liberal Government will work with MADD Canada and other groups to lower the incidents of drunk driving in the province and address other issues related to the inappropriate use of alcohol by expanding the social responsibility activities conducted by the Newfoundland and Labrador Liquor Corporation.**

The controlled distribution of alcohol is based on the premise that government has a responsibility to regulate the use of a potentially dangerous substance for the good of society. Rather than solely being a source of revenue for government, the Newfoundland and Labrador Liquor Corporation should recognize its true public policy purpose: the regulation of the responsible consumption of alcohol.

### *- Gambling problems*

**A Liberal Government will immediately commit a minimum of 5 percent of gambling revenues for social responsibility efforts related to societal problems related to gambling addictions. This would include initiatives such as support services, training and public awareness campaigns to combat gambling addictions.**

Liberals recognize that VLT use and other forms of gambling in this province are serious social problems that need to be addressed. Like any dangerous addictive activity, government has a responsibility to regulate its use.



13.

*Taking Real Action  
on the Environment*

## Chapter 13 - Taking Real Action on the Environment

The Liberal Party of Newfoundland and Labrador is committed to taking real action on improving environmental initiatives and mitigating the negative impacts on our environment. Even simple measures such as providing electronic access to this policy platform document can help our environment.

A Liberal Government is committed to educating people on the environment and introducing initiatives that will cut down on greenhouse gas emissions and protect our pristine natural environment.

The quality of our environment is one of the distinguishing features of Newfoundland and Labrador and the quality of life we enjoy here. The Liberal Party is aware of the connection between the environment, our health, our recreation activities, our economy and our quality of life. We have a forward-looking approach on environmental issues.

### *- Green procurement by government*

**A Liberal Government will establish a purchase Green requirement in its procurement activities.**

To encourage other sectors of our economy to become more environmentally friendly, government must lead by example. Government's vehicle fleet should be a model of fuel efficiency and experiments should take place with the effectiveness of alternative fuel vehicles. Provincial government buildings should also be models of energy efficiency for other levels of government and the private sector. As part of an ongoing commitment to improve the environment, many other jurisdictions throughout North America have integrated environmental performance considerations in the procurement process. Newfoundland and Labrador should be no different.

### *- Work to reduce greenhouse gas emissions*

**A Liberal Government will continue to work with other provinces and the federal government on a climate change strategy that will encourage industry and the general public to change their daily activities and become more environmentally friendly.**

The Liberal Party of Newfoundland and Labrador recognizes our role in preventing climate change. Working with government, business and the general public, initiatives must be sought to encourage the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions into our natural environment.

### *- Holyrood generating plant*

**A Liberal Government will examine means of making the Holyrood Generating plant more environmentally friendly. This will involve burning cleaner fuels and upgrading the facility to minimize the pollution emitted from burning Bunker C oil.**

The Holyrood generating plant has been cited as a major polluter in Canada for the past several

years. People living in the area have continuously complained that something must be done to address this environmental problem. A long-term solution must be found that will ensure the province maintains an effective power supply, while minimizing the negative environmental impacts.

*- Expansion of the "Green Team" program*

**A Liberal Government will expand the "Green Team" program and encourage more students and other interested individuals to partake in such activities.**

Real action is required to enhance conservation programs that will see more work done to clean up water ways, beaches and roadways. Traditionally, students have taken on these jobs as summer activities; however, others should be encouraged and given the option to partake in clean-up activities.

*- Encourage school-based environmental projects*

**A Liberal Government will work with the province's school boards to seek out new opportunities and programming that will educate young people on the importance of a clean and healthy environment.**

Youth involvement in environmental projects will educate our young people about the importance of protecting our environment. To encourage such activity, incentives must be developed that will allow schools in the province to undertake green projects.

*- Improving public and mass transportation in the province*

**A Liberal Government will work with the federal government, municipal governments and Regional Economic Development Boards to improve public transportation options and services in the province.**

While providing expanded public transportation is good economic policy, it is also very important in terms of protecting our environment. An effective public transportation system would encourage people to make more environmentally friendly choices when traveling.

*- Expand the mandate of the MMSB to make it more effective*

**A Liberal Government will expand the mandate of the Multi-Materials Stewardship Board (MMSB) and implement an action plan to reduce the amount of waste going to disposal sites.**

**A Liberal Government will establish a loan fund to be administered through the MMSB for interest-free loans to homeowners and businesses who want to improve energy efficiency.**

**A Liberal Government will direct the MMSB to implement a recovery system for electronic waste such as computers and telephones to ensure that harmful contaminants do not damage the environment.**

The Multi Materials Stewardship Board (MMSB) has in many ways not achieved its full potential. There is a need to re-examine its mandate and operation to see if there are ways to make this agency more effective. Problems such as the dangerous stockpiling of tires cannot be allowed to continue and more attention must be paid to energy conservation and lessening our dependence on fossil fuels. Also, efforts to increase recycling and composting have to be improved throughout the province.

- *Encourage community-based renewable power projects*

**A Liberal Government will encourage community-based renewable power projects to replace diesel generated power.**

It is important that government encourage small renewable energy projects such as wind and solar power to help reduce the negative environmental impacts associated with burning diesel. To ensure such projects are economically viable, government must provide access to the appropriate infrastructure and assure business interests will receive fair compensation for the power they produce.

- *Enforcement of environmental regulations*

**A Liberal Government will provide for better enforcement of current regulations in relation to the protection of the environment and ensure that adequate resources are available to enforce environmental regulations.**

Too often, government does not take the enforcement of environmental regulations seriously. The approach is sometimes more of an effort to make the regulations fit the project, instead of making the project fit the regulations.

- *Implement a safe drinking water program*

**A Liberal Government will improve testing and provide additional funds for infrastructure upgrades to allow municipalities to improve water quality for their residents.**

Clean drinking water is one of the necessities of life and should be one of the top priorities of any government. Too many communities in this province do not have safe drinking water and more investment must be made to ensure the people of this province have safe and healthy water supplies.

- *Develop a comprehensive Green Plan for Newfoundland and Labrador based on public consultation*

**A Liberal Government will develop a “Green Plan” for Newfoundland and Labrador that includes the items mentioned in this policy platform and other items brought forward during a public consultation process.**

If we are serious about protecting the environment, it is time we started to put together a comprehensive plan which focuses attention on environmental issues. We can no longer take our environment for granted and immediate action is required.





14.

*Real Financial Planning  
for the Long-Term*

## Chapter 14 - Real Financial Planning for the Long-Term

The Liberal Party of Newfoundland and Labrador is committed to addressing our long-term debt and establishing a plan to address fiscal targets.

- *Paying down debt with prosperity*

**A Liberal Government will use a percentage of the Prosperity Fund to address fiscal priorities such debt servicing.**

This province will see increased benefits from our offshore oil and gas resources in the coming years and we must act now to address priorities for our people. Oil revenues have a certain lifespan and addressing these priority issues should be of greatest importance. We must act now to address fiscal priorities such as debt servicing.



15.

*Building and Maintaining  
our Infrastructure*

## Chapter 15 - Building and Maintaining our Infrastructure

The Liberal Party of Newfoundland and Labrador is committed to fixing and improving the province's infrastructure for the long-term. While our infrastructure such as roads, bridges and public buildings are aging, government investment has not always met those needs. The recent decision by the Williams Government to close many highways depots across the province during the summer, a period when preventative maintenance work is completed, is a clear example of misplaced priorities. While government may save a small amount of money now, the longer-term problems that are being created will ensure that this money will be spent ten-fold down the road. The Liberal Party recognizes these needs and will act to make the appropriate investments to upgrade our infrastructure.

- *Re-open highways depots to full-year operations*

**A Liberal Government will re-open highways maintenance depots to year-round operations to conduct the appropriate maintenance of the province's roads twelve months a year.**

We have heard the stories of road washouts and even traffic accidents resulting from poor driving conditions in October and November. Part of the blame for these situations can be directly attributable to the decision to close highways depots from May to November. Many people believe that the preventative maintenance that normally takes place during the summer and fall months would ensure that road infrastructure would last longer and be more stable. There have been other instances where appropriate winter clearing services were not provided because staff were not recalled to their jobs. The Liberal Party believes this decision was a mistake and will take appropriate steps to remedy this situation.

- *24 hour snow-clearing services*

**A Liberal Government will ensure 24 hour snow-clearing services to improve safety during winter weather conditions.**

Government's current snow-clearing policy is simply unacceptable. During the winter months, government equipment is removed from the highways between the hours of 10:00pm and 6:00am regardless of the weather conditions. This has created unsafe driving conditions, especially for those who are forced to travel the province's highways during the night or early morning. The current snow-clearing policy is not working and lives are being placed in danger.

- *Roll-on, Roll-off ferry for south coast*

**A Liberal Government will establish a roll-on, roll-off ferry between Pool's Cove, Rencontre East and Bay L'Argent.**

The need exists for improved ferry travel between Pool's Cove, Rencontre East and Bay L'Argent. This area of the province can be linked with a roll-on, roll-off ferry capable of transporting vehicular and pedestrian traffic. This service will replace the existing operation of a passenger only ferry service.

An improved marine transportation link between the Connaigre and Burin Peninsulas will boost local tourism initiatives, improve economic conditions for doing business in the region, and improve access to services for residents.

- *Increase Municipal Operating Grants*

**A Liberal Government will increase Municipal Operating Grants to ensure municipalities have appropriate levels of funding for infrastructure and the provision of services.**

Many municipalities are struggling to provide services and upgrade infrastructure because of a declining tax base and cutbacks to Municipal Operating Grants by government. To ensure strong communities, government must make the appropriate investments that will provide towns and cities with appropriate levels of infrastructure and service. Without these necessities, many rural areas of our province will continue to lose population.

- *Review municipal financing arrangements*

**A Liberal Government will review the financing arrangements with municipalities to ensure debt payment schedules are not negatively impacting infrastructure upgrades and the provision of services.**

With outmigration stealing so many people from rural communities throughout our province, municipal councils are working hard to provide services and upgrade infrastructure with the declining dollars they have at their disposal. For some municipalities, debt financing arrangements with government become a burden and hinder the day to day operations of councils.

- *Upgrade and develop new infrastructure guidelines*

**A Liberal Government will develop a new code and guidelines for building infrastructure in the province and undertake an extensive review of existing infrastructure to determine where upgrades need to take place.**

Over the past few years, more and more damage is occurring from stormy weather conditions. Recently, Tropical Storm Chantal devastated infrastructure on parts of the Avalon Peninsula. It is obvious that culverts and drainage systems must be upgraded to deal with heavy rains and storm surges, or the same problem will continue to occur.



16.

*Truly Open and  
Accountable Government*

## Chapter 16 - Truly Open and Accountable Government

The Liberal Party of Newfoundland and Labrador is committed to open and accountable government. While everyone was shocked with revelations regarding constituency allowances, all politicians must work to ensure that confidence is restored and access to information is readily available to everyone in the province. That is why the Liberal Party is committed to bringing forth new initiatives, in addition to the Green Report, that will make government the most open and accountable in our history.

A truly open and accountable government is committed to changing the culture of openness in government and about encouraging public involvement in government decisions. A Liberal Government would take actions to increase public participation in government decisions and facilitate greater openness and accountability.

### *-Posting travel and entertainment claims on the internet*

**A Liberal Government will ensure that all travel and entertainment claims are posted to the internet to show how taxpayer dollars are being spent. This requirement will be placed on every MHA, Minister and the Premier.**

One of the biggest complaints leveled against politicians over the past number of years has been the secretive nature in which public money has been spent. While claims will now be available to the general public, we believe this process should be made easier and made available to everyone in the province. That is why we will ensure that all travel and entertainment claims for MHAs, Ministers and the Premier will be posted to the internet for all to see.

### *- Legislative debate during normal House of Assembly hours*

**A Liberal Government will conduct legislative debate during normal House of Assembly hours, only moving to late night sessions when stalling tactics are used by the Opposition to hold up necessary legislation.**

Having the House of Assembly operate under normal working hours was a commitment of the PC Party during the last provincial election. However, like many of their other election commitments, it was broken. Instead, the House of Assembly is often open to the early hours of the morning as government rushes their legislative agenda through the House of Assembly under the cover of darkness. The Liberal Party feels that debate on legislation should take place during daytime hours in the presence of the media and the general public.

### *- Fairness in Fees Act*

**A Liberal Government will introduce a Fairness in Fees Act that will promote public debate and discussion on potential fee increases.**

In their first budget, the Williams Government raised 150 fees on everything from motor vehicle

registration to ambulance fees. With these increases, government is taking \$26 million out of the pockets of the people of this province every year. The Fairness in Fees Act would require such increases to be debated and passed by the House of Assembly. Such an Act would promote public discussion and prevent governments from hiding numerous fee increases in budget legislation.

- *Legislative review committees*

**A Liberal Government will establish Legislative Review Committees that will seek public input on legislation before it is voted on in the House of Assembly.**

The Liberal Party believes in the importance of fostering political debate on issues to be brought before the legislature of this province. Too often, government tries to force through legislation without providing full and fair opportunity for the people of the province to have input.

- *Re-broadcasting the House of Assembly*

**A Liberal Government would re-broadcast question period and debates in the House of Assembly during evenings and weekends to allow everyone the opportunity to follow the proceedings.**

It was under the previous Liberal Government that the House of Assembly was first televised in this province. This has opened up the procedures of government to the scrutiny of many interested citizens and was a major step forward in terms of openness and accountability of elected representatives. Unfortunately, the House of Assembly is only televised when the legislature is sitting, primarily during daytime hours. This has prevented many working individuals from watching their elected representatives debate government policy.

- *Qualified appointment process*

**A Liberal Government will improve the appointment procedures for government agencies, boards and commissions by outlining specific qualifications required for the positions and opening the process to public application.**

Since coming to power, the Williams Government has stacked government agencies, boards and commissions with close friends, business associates and supporters of the PC Party. Such political patronage has to end.

- *Whistleblower legislation*

**A Liberal Government will enact whistleblower legislation to protect government employees who bring forward information that protects the public interest.**

Fear and intimidation has been used by government to limit public access to information, a tactic that has been used quite often by the Williams Government. People who work in the public sector have a responsibility to serve the public interest and not the political interests of any politician or Party. These individuals should have the right and protection of identifying problems without suffering repercussion or dismissal by their employer.



- *Recorded free votes*

**A Liberal Government will implement a system of recorded free votes to ensure that constituents know where their MHA voted on any given issue.**

Currently, the only time a vote is recorded in the House of Assembly is if Division is called. This means that the significant majority of votes are conducted by a simple response of yay or nay, with no individual MHA being referenced or identified for their support of a certain matter. Recorded free votes would provide constituents with a record of how their particular MHA voted on issues and their attendance in the House of Assembly. This would ensure that every elected member would be aware that their voting record could be referenced. It would also limit the dominating control and manipulation of votes by the Premier's Office in the House of Assembly.

